

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PER-05 A-01 SY-10 SS-15 PA-03 PRS-01

L-03 RSR-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 /069 W

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R 151115Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6415

USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BLANTYRE 1174

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MI

SUBJ: GOM INVESTIGATION OF VOA MONITORING SERVICE

USIA FOR IAA, IBS

REF: A. USIA/IBS MESSAGE AUG 1, 1973; B. BLANTYRE 1015

1. USIS LOCAL EMPLOYEE SANFORD CHIPALA INTERROGATED BY GOM POLICE SPECIAL BRANCH FOR THREE HOURS MORNING OF AUGUST 14.

2. AS POST RADIO/CINEMA OPERATOR, CHIPALA OFTEN IN CONTACT WITH LOCAL VOA MONITOR WHO EMPLOYED FULLTIME AS ENGINEER BY MALAWI BROADCASTING CORPORATION. REF A REQUESTED VOA MONITOR MAKE TAPE SAMPLES LOCAL RECEPTION TO ENABLE AGENCY EVALUATE DETERIORATED SIGNAL. MONITOR INFORMED ACCORDINGLY.

3. AFTER INTERROGATION, CHIPALA GAVE TYPED REPORT TO PAO. ACCORDING TO REPORT, CHIPALA QUESTIONED ON WHAT HE KNEW ABOUT ALL VOA MONITORS, WHAT THEY DO AND WHO THEY ARE. HE IDENTIFIED THREE MONITORS USED AT INTERVALS OVER FIVE-YEAR PERIOD, EXPLAINING ALL WERE EMPLOYED ON PART-TIME BASIS, TO LISTEN TO VOA AND REPORT THE BEST FREQUENCIES. HE INFORMED SPECIAL BRANCH THAT VOA HAD RECEIVED COMPLAINTS THAT THE FREQUENCIES WERE BAD AND WANTED A REPORT. WHEN ASKED IF HE OR ANYONE AT USIS TRANSMITTED NEWS REPORTS TO VOA, CHIPALA REPLIED, "WE DO NOT SEND NEWS OUT AND I DO NOT DO ANY MONITORING
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NOR DO I KNOW OF ANYBODY IN THE OFFICE WHO DID." CHIPALA

WAS THEN TAKEN TO TWO HEADS OF SPECIAL BRANCH WHERE QUESTIONING WAS REPEATED. HE CONCLUDES, "I WAS QUESTIONED ALL OVER AGAIN AND MY ANSWERS WERE THE SAME. THEN, THEY TOLD ME TO GO BACK TO WORK AND STAY MOUTH CLOSED AN NOT LET ANYONE KNOW I HAD BEEN QUESTIONED BY THEM."

4. INVESTIGATION PROBABLY OUTGROWTH OF GOM SENSITIVITIES ABOUT JOURNALISTS' ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED REF B. NEWS TRANSMISSIONS BY ANY SOURCE, WHETHER LOCAL STRINGER, FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT OR FOREIGN MISSION ARE SUSPECT AND SUBJECT TO RETALIATION BY GOM. BBC MONITORING OPERATION BY BRITISH NATIONALS RECENTLY CLOSED DOWN ON SUSPICIAN THAT NEWS ALSO TRANSMITTED; UK HIGH COMMISSION WAS ABLE NEGOTIATE RESTORATION OF BBC MONITORING ACTIVITY ONLY WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY.

5. IN PRESENT ATMOSPHERE, POST FILING OF USINFO'S COULD PRESENT POTENTIAL PROBLEM IF KNOWN TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES. GOM GOAL CLEARLY SEEMS TO BE ELIMINATION OF ALL REPEAT ALL UNCONTROLLED NEWS TRANSMISSIONS FROM MALAWI REGARDLESS OF CONTENT. TO AVOID PROBLEMS, PROPOSE DISCONTINUE FILING USINFO'S OR FILE ON LOU BASIS ONLY. REQUEST STATE/USIA GUIDANCE.

6. COPY USIS LOCAL EMPLOYEE'S FULL REPORT ON INTERROGATION FOLLOWS NEXT AIR POUCH FIELD MESSAGE.
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